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SOME STEPS IN THE EVOLUTION OF SOCIAL OCCUPATIONS.

VI.

THE attitudes of the child in relation to those of the civilized adult present these contrasts: the child's attitudes are undifferentiated, those of the adult are differentiated; those of the child are idealized forms, whether considered with reference to the past or to the future; those of the adult are real; the attitudes of the child are largely practical; those of the adult, though practical, may, and often do, become intellectual, and hence abstract.

In making use of the materials of the remote past perhaps the greatest mistake that is liable to be made is the failure to recognize that the child's attitudes are dramatic rather than real. In the use of the materials of more recent ages the danger is, rather, the failure to recognize that the child's attitudes are practical in any sense of the word. Too often the child's attitudes are regarded as intellectual from the first, and he is compelled to assume an attitude which he is unable to take. In this way educational forces are diverted from their normal channels and devoted to fostering a juggling with words, a repetition of formulas, a playing with symbols.

Practical activities—social occupations—are so new a feature of public-school work that there are yet many unsolved problems with reference to their place, their form, and their function. When they are mentioned, ideas of the simple household industries, on the one hand, and ideas of the isolated hand-work which is becoming popular in the schools, on the other, are most likely to come to one's mind. But neither of these conceptions is sufficiently comprehensive to include all that is implied in the educational use of practical activities.

The house industries were carried on in the home at a time when society made fewer demands upon the individual than at present. Communities were isolated, and in most respects self-

sufficing. Life was simple. There was little demand for special knowledge or skill in the sciences and arts. Industries were carried on in the home for the sake of practical results. The experience thus gained served as a means of interpreting the formal instruction given in the school when schools were established; but neither the teacher nor the parents made any conscious use of these experiences in developing the principles which underlie the sciences and the arts. The demand for the scientific method and for scientific knowledge was not great enough to bring such problems to consciousness.

The question so often raised regarding whether a boy shall be taught cooking and sewing, or whether a girl shall be taught carpentry and metal-work, serves to indicate that we are not yet free from the industrial bias which compels us to interpret results with reference to utilitarian ends. In the introduction of handwork into the school we have swung to the opposite extreme. Ostensibly it has been introduced for educational ends. In most cases it is planned from the logical rather than from the psychological, the technical rather than the practical, point of view. The isolation thus brought about is completed by the failure to make use of the technique involved in the mastery of processes having other conscious content than that of technique. Such courses, though they may answer to the abstract conceptions of the pedagogue, and serve as a temporary means of facilitating the division of labor and the work of administration, fall wide of the mark. They leave the child quite out of the account. To be sure, the child finds in isolated activities, which call into play certain powers of body and mind, a respite from a program made up largely of intellectual tasks; but this is not enough. The attainment of educational ends surely implies more than a sandwiching of rest periods into a so-called intellectual program, the establishment of certain physical and mental co-ordinations, and the learning of the grammar of a language for which there is no demand. As far as it goes, exercise in technique is well; but unless technical skill finds support in ideas, unless motor activity finds a place with reference to the curriculum as a whole and to the society in which the child lives, the energy which is now

being devoted to isolated forms of hand-work will soon be expended in the form of a "fad."

The introduction as isolated activities of such industrial arts as basketry, loom-weaving, pottery, cooking, sewing, carpentry, and metal-work is a failure to make use of conditions for securing educative results. As long as the child's activities are simple and direct, less harm comes from such isolated activities than at a later period; but even at the earlier time they fall far short of meeting the needs of the child. When the child is able to project ends into the future, when he is able to reconstruct past situations and to carry over the embodied truth as a means of guidance in his own activities, to permit conditions in our public schools which keep the experience of the child in the personal, the local, and the material, when he is able to make the transition to the social, the general, and the spiritual, is to do violence to the best thought of the age.

The school presents conditions for a much more vital use of practical activities than we have yet made. It is protected from hostile elements, and surrounded by a veriety of socializing influences; hence surplus energy and leisure are assured. To secure the most complete development of the individual and the most efficient service for society, there is need of incorporating into the curriculum such achievements of mankind as can be appreciated by children. There is need of using a method which will permit the child to make use of the forces at his command in securing such a first-hand experience as will enable him to interpret that which is most significant in community life. There is need of an ideal in harmony with the highest conceptions of civilization, and a consciousness on the part of those who have education in charge of the significance of the work in which they are engaged.

It is thus evident that the introduction of practical activities into the school does not imply that the simple house industries of pats ages are to be carried over without change into the school. Neither does it imply that the child is to be occupied with isolated activities selected from modern processes for the sake of technique alone. It implies rather that the impulses, which originally were produced by industrial activities and which appear as power-

ful forces in the life of the child today, shall find opportunity to express themselves in forms that appeal to children, and at the same time shall connect with modern institutions which, in a large measure, condition the life of the child.

Early undifferentiated forms of industrial processes which have since been rendered complex are the most suitable occupations for the child of seven years. To select a simple form which has not developed would be to start the child on a road that led nowhere, to keep him occupied with a belated form, or to put him in the place of the adult whose function it is to bear the brunt of the struggle involved in breaking the way into the unexplored regions of thought and action. The various phases of the fundamental undifferentiated industries afford educational opportunities for acquiring an experience fundamental to the future study of the sciences and the arts. When this basis is laid, when the child has followed the development of an industry to a point where some phase of the process becomes so important to society as to have fixed attention upon itself for a period, he can appreciate the forces and conditions which called forth the sciences and the arts. The special problems that thus face the child, the enriching materials that are furnished by the racial experiences in the processes considered, furnish a suitable stimulus to the child's interests which are becoming differentiated.

The best way of introducing practical activities into the school varies with local conditions. That which is to constitute the first-hand experience and that which is to be interpreted by means of symbols can be determined only after a knowledge of the environment which conditions the child's acts.

The stage of development at which the child has arrived is also an important factor in determining the form which the activities shall take. To the child of five or six years, who draws no sharp lines between actual materials and processes, and a dramatization of them, practical activities may well take a different form from what they do when the ideal and the real world come to stand out in marked contrast. Play is as real as work; pantomimic representation is as satisfactory as actual participation. Since the most powerful appeals come from the immediate

environment, and since many of the stimuli are somewhat complex, it is fortunate that the child has at his command modes of expression that involve the simplest kind of a technique. Gesture, pantomime, dramatic play of all kinds—all these forms are as well adapted to educational ends within the school as they are to the normal growth of the child when left to his own resources. They are especially adapted to the service of the child at the time when the steps in the process, the relation of means to ends, and the result of the actvity are matters of little moment.

As long as attention is largely absorbed in direct activities, there is little demand for a conscious use of racial experiences. In so far as the materials of primitive life affect the child, it is in an unconscious way. The child's experience is not of a kind to enable him to interpret the achievements of the past. Not until he is able to appreciate means and ends as such does he possess the historic sense to such a degree as to make a conscious use of the materials of the past. It is through the teacher that the lessons contained in historical primitive occupations are to be transmitted during these early years. In so far as the teacher gains the spirit of these lessons, in so far as she applies it in her work with the child, she will allow him to participate in present activities that call for the use of the entire body. She will make sure, on the one hand, that the occupations are of such a fundamental and permanent type as to relate a great variety of impulses that are in need of development; and, on the other, that they organize the materials of the external world with reference to relationships that are vital in the upbuilding of social and industrial institutions. The lesson of the past is best heeded at this time by an apparent disregard for its materials. Time is better occupied in focusing attention upon the direct and immediate problems that involve the use of the materials and forces in the environment than in attempting to utilize the materials of the past before the organs are developed by means of which they can be apprehended. The serious search of primitive people for food is paralleled by the spontaneous play of the child in meadow, field, and pasture, or on the playground, in the vacant lot, or in the park. The hunting dance is paralleled by

rhythmic social games which the child invents for the satisfaction of the group.

The organization of the spontaneous activities of the child by means of field lessons, games, and other practical activities is a necessary means of securing the conditions for a free play of the child's powers. It is a necessary means of gaining a rich experience in the processes that are fundamental to community life. Gesture, pantomime, dramatic play of all kinds, construction, observation, experimentation, drawing, painting, modeling, music, language—all are proper avenues for the child's energies to find expression. All contribute something to his growth and to the satisfaction of instinctive attitudes. No one of these activities is of interest at first on its own account, but each is present as a phase of a larger process. From that process the different interests gradually emerge, just as those which represent the sciences and the arts emerged from the industrial activities of the race.

The child of seven years may well begin to make a conscious use of materials of the past. This is the time when he begins to recognize the inadequacy of the means at his disposal to secure a desired end. For this reason he eagerly avails himself of such opportunities as promise to yield him the aid he needs without too great a strain of attention.

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